

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Bitterroot Tool and Machine

Montana Manufacturing Extension Center

Bitterroot Tool and Machine, LLC Receives Stamp of Approval for ISO Certification

Client Profile:

Bitterroot Tool and Machine, LLC, (BTM) is a contract manufacturer in Stevensville, Montana designing and producing products for the electronic connector, aerospace, munitions, and other industrial customers who seek superior quality and innovation in fabricated and stamped parts made from metal and plastic. BTM, founded in 1999, employs 15 people.

Situation:

While company success has been built on the high quality of its products and tooling, BTM had observed a growing industry trend of customers asking for ISO certification as a requirement for doing business. The changing marketplace was a call to action for BTM, with aerospace primes beginning to care more about second tier supply standards. An effective quality management system became critical for long term relationships with customers and market competitiveness. BTM was able to reach the crucial goal of implementing a quality system and getting certified by enlisting the help of Ravalli County Economic Development Authority (RCEDA), the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Solution:

Initiating talks with BTM management to see what might help grow the business and strengthen the area economy, RCEDA learned that to aggressively pursue additional profitable contracts, BTM would need to invest a significant amount of time and resources into gaining ISO certification, a difficult proposition for a small firm. A USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) was sought and awarded to help out in the effort. Such grants are intended to finance and facilitate development of small business enterprise in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000 because each new job in rural communities supports the local economy. With funding in place for the project, two MMEC Field Engineers conducted a gap assessment audit to compare existing quality levels and documentation to the ISO standard. They then developed a plan to achieve certification. Part way through the process, revisions to the 2000 standard were released that provide a more customer focused, less complex approach. In response, MMEC worked up guidelines on where to focus updates to ensure compliance with the 2008 revision. The team worked with BTM to capture its procedures and data collection processes and to develop a manual that would help to maintain and continue improvements. ANAB [ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board accredited] registrars were identified to perform the registration audit. MMEC provided an ISO Internal Quality Auditor Training workshop and participated in the registrar's pre-assessment audit. As a result of MMEC's assistance, BTM has secured a contract from a tier one aerospace supplier, while a key customer has invested in a product qualification test for the stamped raw nut that BTM produces.

Results:

www.mep.nist.gov



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- * Achieved ISO 9001:2008 certification.
- * Invested \$30,000 in capital improvements.
- * Created/retained 2 jobs.

Projected:

- * Increased sales of \$150,000.
- * Retained sales of \$250,000.

Testimonial:

"We implemented quite a few things that are important. We couldn't have done it without MMEC's Kreg Worrest. He really understands how to put the information on paper."

Randy Jones, President